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By *ADAM FITZ-ADAM.*

To be continued every THURSDAY.

THURSDAY, *April* the 26th, 1753.

TWICE in every year are ſolemnized thoſe grand diverſions, with which our nobility, gentry and others, entertain themſelves at New market; and as this is the vertumnal ſeaſon for the celebration of thoſe curious ſports and feſtivals, and as they are, at this time, likely to be held with the utmoſt ſplendor, and magnificence, I think it may not be improper to amuſe my town readers, with one ſingle paper upon the ſubject.

IN this I will endeavour to ſet forth the uſefulneſs of theſe anniverſary meetings, deſcribing the manner and method of exhibiting ſuch games; and then ſhew what benefit may ariſe to the kingdom, by horſe-racing in general, on the one hand; and what detriment may happen from them to the public, on the other, by their ſpreading too widely over the whole kingdom.

I READ in one of the news-papers of laſt week, the following article, " 'Tis ſaid that garrets at New-" market are let at four guineas each, for the time " of the meeting." What! ſaid I to myſelf, are our

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principal nobility content to lie in garrets, at ſuch an exorbitant price, for the ſake of theſe amuſements? Or are our jockey-gentry, and tradeſmen, extravagant enough to throw away their looſe corn (as I may properly call it on this occaſion), ſo idly and ridiculouſly? To be ſure there is not a more noble diverſion than this. In its original, it was of royal inſtitution, and carried on in the beginning with much honour and integrity; but as the beſt conſtitution will always degenerate, I am fearful this may be grown too much into a ſcience, wherein the adepts may have carried matters to a nicety, not altogether reconcilable to the ſtricteſt notions of integrity, and which may by degrees, by their affecting to become notable in the profeſſion, corrupt the morals of our young nobility. The language of the place is generally to be underſtood by the rule of contraries. If any one ſays his horſe is a pretty good one, but as ſlow as a *town-top* (for ſimilies are much in uſe), you may conclude him to be an exceeding ſpeedy one, but not ſo good at *bottom*. If he mentions his deſign of throwing a particular horſe ſoon out of *training*, you may be aſſured he has a mind to match that horſe as ſoon as he can; and ſo it is in every thing elſe they throw out. Foreigners who come here for curioſity, cannot be ſhewn a finer ſight than theſe races, which are almoſt peculiar to this country: but I muſt confeſs that I have been ſometimes put a little to the bluſh at incidents that are pretty pregnant in the place. Every body is dreſſed ſo perfectly alike, that it is extreamly difficult to diſtinguiſh between his GRACE and his GROOM; I have heard a ſtranger aſk a man of quality how often he dreſſed, and watered his horſes? how much corn, and bread, and hay, he gave them? how many miles he thought they could run in ſuch a number of minutes? and how long he had lived with his MASTER? Thoſe who have been at the place will not be ſurprized at theſe miſtakes; for a pair of boots, and buckſkin breeches,

breeches, a fuſtian frock, with a leathern belt about it, and a black velvet cap, is the common covering of the whole town: ſo that if the inſide do not differ, the outſide of my lord and his rider are exactly the ſame. There is another moſt remarkable affectation, which is this. Thoſe who are known to have the moſt, and perhaps beſt horſes of the place, always appear themſelves on the very worſt, and go to the turf on ſome ordinary ſcrub tit, ſcarce worth five pounds. From perſons thus mounted and accoutred, what a ſurpriſe muſt it be to hear a bett offered of an hundred pounds to fifty, or ſometimes three hundred to two, when you would imagine the rider to be ſcarce worth a groat? In that circular convention before the race begins, at the Devil's Ditch, all are hail fellows well met, and every one is at liberty, taylor, diſtiller, or otherwiſe, to offer and take ſuch betts, as he thinks proper; and many thouſand pounds are uſually laid on a ſide. When the horſes are in ſight, and come near Choak-Jade, immediately the company all diſperſe, as if the devil roſe out of his ditch and drove them, to get to the turning of the lands, the red poſt, or ſome other ſtation, they chuſe, for ſeeing the puſh made. Now the contention becomes animating. 'Tis delightful to ſee two or ſometimes more, of the moſt beautiful animals of the creation, ſtruggling for ſuperiority, ſtretching every muſcle and ſinew to obtain the prize, and reach the goal! To obſerve the ſkill and addreſs of the riders, who are all diſtinguiſhed by different colours, of white, blue, green, red, and yellow, ſometimes ſpurring or whipping, ſometimes checking or pulling, to give freſh breath and courage! and it is often obſerved that the race is won, as much by the dexterity of the rider, as by the vigour or fleetneſs of the animal.

When the ſport is over the company ſaunter away towards the Warren-Hill, before the other horſes,

horſes, left at the ſeveral ſtables in the town, are rode out to take their evening exerciſe, and their water. On this delightful ſpot you may ſee, at once, above an hundred of the moſt beautiful horſes in the univerſe, all led out in ſtrings, with the grooms and boys upon them, in their ſeveral liveries, diſtinguiſhing each perſon of rank, they belong to. This is indeed a noble ſight; it is a piece of grandeur, and an expenſive one too, which no nation can boaſt of, but our own. To this the crown contributes not only, by a very handſome allowance for keeping horſes, but alſo by giving plates to be run for by horſes and mares at different ages, in order to encourage the breed, by keeping up the price of them, and to make the breeders extreamly careful of their race and genealogy.

THE pedigree of theſe horſes is more ſtrictly regarded and carefully looked into, than that of a knight of Malta. They muſt have no blemiſhed quarter in the family on either ſide for many generations; their blood muſt have run pure and untainted, from the great, great, five times great grandfather and grandam, to be atteſted in the moſt authentic manner by the hand of the breeder. It is this care of the breed, and particularly with an eye to their ſtrength, that makes all the world ſo fond of our horſes. Many thouſands are carried out of England every year, ſo that it is become a trade of great conſequence, and brings a vaſt ballance of money to this country annually. The French monarch rides no other horſes but ours, in his favourite diverſion of hunting. You may at any time ſee two or three hundred beautiful Engliſh geldings, in thoſe great and noble ſtables at Chantilli. Moſt of the German princes, and many of their nobility are deſirous of having Engliſh horſes; and, I dare ſay, his preſent M——y of P——a however military his genius may be, had rather *mount* an Engliſh horſe, at a *review* of his troops, than a *breach* at any ſiege in Europe.

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THE country races over the whole kingdom, are what I confeſs give me ſome little diſreliſh to the ſport. Every county, and almoſt the whole of it, is mad during the time of the races. Many ſubſtantial farmers go to them with thirty, or forty pounds in their pockets, and return without one ſingle farthing; here they drink, learn to be vicious, and the whole time is ſpent in riot and diſorder. An honeſt butcher that is taken in, at a horſe-race, is tempted perhaps in his return, to borrow an ox, or a few ſheep of his neighbour, to make up his loſſes. An induſtrious tradeſman, or a good farmer, has ſometimes turned an immediate highwayman to be even with the rogue that bubbled him at the race. Upon the whole, if I conſider only how much time is loſt to all the labouring men in this kingdom, by county races, the damage they occaſion is immenſe. Let us ſuppoſe it but a week's labour all over England; and (if we conſider the number of plates in the different metropolis's, beſides the leſſer country plates) this muſt be allowed a very moderate computation: and then let thoſe two ingenious gentlemen, Mr. Pond, and Mr. Heber however they may be at variance with each other, join to compute how much the loſs muſt be to the whole kingdom. I dare anſwer for it, that it muſt amount to many hundred thouſands of pounds. But as my paper was principally deſigned in honour of horſes, I will not be led to urge any thing againſt them. Horſes of all kinds have ever been held in the higheſt eſteem. Darius was choſen king of Perſia by the neighing of his horſe. I queſtion if Alexander himſelf, had puſhed his conqueſts half ſo far, if Bucephalus had not ſtooped to take him on his back. An emperor at Rome made his horſe a conſul; and it will be readily owned that the dignity was as properly conferred upon the beaſt, as the imperial diadem upon his maſter.